SIDELIGHTS on BERLIN In War Time

Germany Taking No Chances of Harboring Spies—The Man From Chicago — The Butter Question — Cards for Foods—"Starvation" a Mere Dream—Canned Goods From America. Copper for the Government.

Special Correspondence of The Star.

BERLIN, March 6, 1916.

THE other day a man came from Chicago to Berlin. He came by way of Holland, and he did not know that he would have to be searched until he came to the frontier. He said that at first he was angry, but when he saw how nice the customs men were he laughed with them. He had three books, two Bibles and a Chicago telephone book. The Germans took the Bibles from him, but he was allowed to keep the telephone book.

The Bibles were taken because carrying messages in them is one of the favorite methods of spies, and Germany is taking no chances. The man from Chicago said that he felt very secure when the searching was going on, for he knew that he had nothing. He smiled, and said to the soldier who was searching the seams of his coat, his shoes and his hat, "Go ahead! I have nothing."

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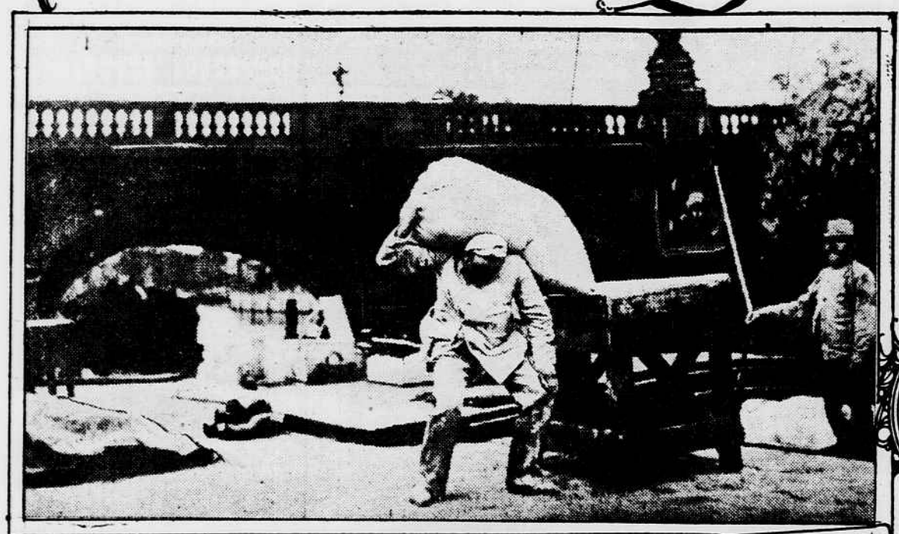
But suddenly his smile faded, for the soldier found something. As the man was from Chicago, where you can transfer as much as you like, he had acquired the habit of getting transfers and sticking them in the turn-back cuff of his coat sleeve. The soldier triumphantly waved a green and a blue transfer in the air. It really looked serious to the man from Chicago, and he had visions of himself being hung or shot as a spy.

The searcher led him away to the officer in charge of the customs. The man from Chicago excitedly explained all about it, and the searcher stood by with a grave look on his face. The officer took the transfers and examined them carefully. Then he burst out laughing, and said in perfectly good English, "I understand. I had the same habit myself when I was in Chicago."



UNLOADING FLOUR ON A WHARF AT BERLIN

All the Americans in Berlin get wild letters from home. "Are you really starving?" they ask. "Do you ever get any meat to eat?" "Have you any money left?" One American girl received a letter from an American who had been a student in Berlin when the war started. He wrote: "Dear Kitty, is it really true that the people of Berlin have had nothing to eat for three months? If this is so when you answer this put a circle with a cross in it in the corner and then I will know."

Another letter from America ran: "Is it true that butter is $1 a pound, and that the people must stand in a line for two days to get any?"

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These letters are so amusing to the Americans here that they tell about them in great glee. We have all we need, and the men that eat in restaurants don't even know that the butter question is before the people at all. They order butter and they get it.

The butter question in Germany is not such a serious one. In Bavaria and Wurttemberg they have all the butter the people wish, and it is only 2 marks a pound. As a mark is now worth only about 22 cents, it makes the price about 44 cents a pound. In Prussia and Saxony, where there is not so much butter, it is 2 marks and 68 pfennigs a pound, about 57 cents. Most of the better-class German families have had their butter sent from Mecklenburg. It is packed in large cases and it comes just as regularly as before the war.

EVERYTHING ON THIS COUNTER IS A SUBSTITUTE FOR SOMETHING THAT IS NOW SCARCE IN GERMANY

Most of the people who stand in the butter lines in Berlin belong to that class of people who want to get something because they think it is hard to get. A great many of them have butter at home, and they run from one butter line to another just for the excitement of the thing. Nearly always it is the old women who stand in the butter lines of Berlin, and most of them have the time of their lives doing so, for there they can gossip and neargossip, and they look forward to butter line day as one would look forward to going to the theater.

In the theaters they make many puns about the potatoes and the butter, and everybody takes it as a joke. One German comedian has made a great hit with a song called "Butter Ausverkauft." He also tells a funny story about three little girls who were bragging about their families' acquaintances. One said: "My mother knows a lady who knows the kaiserin." "Ah," said the second, "that is nothing. My brother is in the army and he has talked with Hindenburg." The third drew herself up proudly. "That's nothing," she said; "my sister knows a girl who works in a butter store!"

Since January 12 the bread card has been stamped when butter has been bought, and this is quite the same as the butter card. So now gradually the butter lines will cease and the butter regulations of Germany will go down in history with the bread regulations as two of the most far-seeing things in this war. The milk card is issued to families only where there are very small children, and these families are served first. They have also a rice card, which isn't a necessity, but only shows the sparingness of the German government.

The food regulations are different in every kingdom of Germany. For instance, in Saxony they were not allowed to bake stollen, the famous Christmas cake, while in Prussia there was plenty of stollen, and even yet one can buy a cake of stollen at a very moderate price. In Bavaria there is plenty of bacon and it is scarce in Prussia. In Hungary it has never been necessary to make any food regulations. They have no butter cards, and they do have plenty of pork.

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If anything is scarce in Germany, the Germans use it very sparingly and invent a substitute for it, and often the substitutes are as good as, and sometimes better than, the real thing. Potato flour has been found to be as satisfactory as wheat flour, only a little darker in color. The very newest thing is wood alcohol in tablet form. One tablet will heat any liquid in three minutes. Macaroni is difficult to obtain, but no more expensive than at home. Many cooks use cornstarch for thickening gravies and sauces instead of white flour, and it is delicious.

Canned corn and canned beans can be bought in some of the stores of Berlin, but it is bought only by the Americans. Most Germans have never tasted baked beans, canned corn and succotash. In Belgium, where so many thousand cans of corn and beans have been sent by kind-hearted Americans, the natives have not the slightest idea what to do with them. Most of them eat it raw without cooking, and then wonder why the Americans don't send them things that are fit to eat.

The German people have always considered pineapples great luxuries, and even in times of peace they are very expensive. It was not so many years ago that the first pineapple was brought to Prussia. The King of Prussia, who was a boy at the time, was given his first taste. He minced it gingerly, and when asked what it tasted like he replied: "It tastes like sausage."

Before Christmas the groschen, or ten-pfennig piece, was very scarce and stamps were used as change. You could pay your street car fare with a stamp or buy things in a store with them. Since Christmas these pieces have reappeared as if by magic, from where no one knows. It is said that their scarcity was due to the fact that soldiers going to the front carried pocketfuls of them away with them, but the reason for their return has not been explained.

On Thursday morning, January 13, every one who lived in Charlottenburg, a suburb of Berlin, received a letter. It was printed on green paper and looked very official. It was about the metal collection for Charlottenburg. Here again Germany is not waiting. There is plenty of copper in Germany, and in spite of the English much comes from outside. But, just the same, Germany is getting ready for a rainy day.

The green letter divided the people into four sections and stated the day when the copper man would call to get the copper, brass and nickel. There was a list of 250 articles which the copper man would take and which the people were perfectly willing to give.

For every speck of copper the copper man takes the people are paid at the rate of 50 cents a pound for pure copper and about 25 cents a pound for metal that is part copper. For brass the price is 28 cents for pure brass and 25 cents for part brass; and for nickel, pure, the price is $1.60, and $1.30 for part nickel.

The copper collectors began by taking all the stove doors which were of brass and substituting iron ones. As every room in Germany has a stove with two large brass oven doors, one will have some idea of the number of doors that will be collected at the end of this copper campaign.

A RESTAURANT IN BERLIN WHERE A GOOD MEAL CAN BE BOUGHT FOR FIVE CENTS

A STORE IN CHARLOTTENBURG A SUBURB OF BERLIN

Mine Owners of Alaska Make Millions of Dollars From Low-Grade Ores

MINING Ore That Yields Only One Dollar and a Half Per Ton—A Visit to the Alaska Gastineau Property—Its Enormous Extent and Something as to Its Possibilities—One Hundred Years' Work in Sight—A Walk Through the Mines and a Look at the Mills—Revolutions in Mining Machinery, and How the Miners Live.

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JUNEAU, Alaska.

I HAVE just returned from a trip through what promises to be one of the most famous gold mines of the world. I have ridden through its miles of tunnels behind an electric engine, and have walked through the mighty caverns, called stopes, where they are blasting down the ore and dropping it into the cars for the mills. I have gone through the new crushing and reduction works, the latest of their kind, and have seen, as it were, the mechanical triumph of the twentieth century in saving the riches hidden in the bowels of the earth.

The greatest mines of today are those which deal with low-grade ores. This is so of the gold mines of the Rand, in South Africa. It is so of the largest copper mines of the Rockies and of the Treadwell mines, which lie within a rifle shot of where I am writing. I have told you how the Treadwell properties have already produced $60,000,000 of pure gold. They have repaid the purchase price of Alaska many times over. All of that gold came from ore that ran from two to three dollars a ton. The mine I visited today has a mighty ore body whose gold contents average about $1.50 per ton, and still the machinery for mining and milling is such that fully half of that amount is clear profit. The actual cost of mining the gold is now about 60 cents a ton, and it may be cut to 50 cents or even lower than that.

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Have you any idea of what gold ore carrying only $1.50 a ton means? Gold is worth about $20 an ounce, and at that rate $1.50 worth of gold would equal only about one-thirteenth of an ounce. Divide a twenty-dollar gold piece into thirteen parts and each part will not be as big as a pea. Nevertheless, that pea of gold is all that is to be found in one whole ton of this ore.

A ton of ore is a cartload for two horses. Now grind your pea into the finest of powder and put one of the grains of that powder in every pebble or broken piece of a cartload of gravel and you have some idea of how the gold is scattered through the rock and how difficult it is to get it all out.

Or suppose the gold to be salt, and the ore to be water. I went to a drug store today and weighed out enough salt to just equal the weight of the gold in a ton of this ore. The salt did not fill the smallest teaspoon. But a ton of water would fill a 250-gallon hogshead. Now if you should drop your spoonful of salt into the hogshead and churn up the water until the salt is thoroughly mixed through it all, you would have just the proportion of the gold and rock in the mine of which I am writing. Think of getting the pea made of gold powder out of the cartload of rock in such a way that half of it will more than pay all the costs, and you have the problem which the operators of this mine have successfully solved.

It seems a petty business, does it not? Nevertheless it is one of the biggest businesses of the world of today. It takes millions to work the mine and it will probably pay millions in profits. The mine I refer to is the Alaska Gastineau property. It is only one of several mighty low-grade propositions along the Gastineau channel which will keep thousands of miners and millions of dollars of machinery at work here for a century to come. Adjoining it is the Alaska Juneau mine, a similar mountain of gold which is now at its very beginning. Farther along is the Ebner mine, another great property, and there are other deposits about of enormous extent. Today I shall write of the Alaska Gastineau only.

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The mountain of low-grade ore over the Alaska Gastineau mine rises almost precipitously from the Gastineau channel. Its ore body is said to cover something like 2,000 acres. It is more than two miles in length and the miners have already made twenty miles of tunnels and cross-cuts in their development works. According to the report of the managing director, D. C. Jackling, to the stockholders, the block of ore has something like 21,000,000 tons above a certain level and at least 100,000,000 tons above the level of the sea. The Treadwell group on the opposite side of the channel is now extending mines under the sea, so that there is really no telling how large the Gastineau ore body is.

The outcroppings of the mines begin at a half mile or more above the sea level and tunnels have been cut at intervals from there down to 2,000 feet. The mines have been further prospected by diamond drills and by shafts and cross-cuts, so that its owners should know pretty well what they have.

All this has cost millions. Fortunes were put into the property before it came into the hands of the present owners, and they have spent millions more in installing machinery that will do the work at the least possible cost, and in the institution of a hydro-electric plant situated ten miles away which gives them 6,000 horsepower. Nearly all the work of the mines and the mills is done by electricity, and it is the dropping of the water on the turbines ten miles away that gives the force that is now dragging this gold from the earth, and changing it into the great yellow bricks which go to the mint. I have visited many mining properties here and there over the world, but nowhere have I seen machinery that seems so near human in its economical operation and in giving the maximum results for the minimum consumption of human muscle and brain.

THE CAR IS AN OPEN PLATFORM ON WHEELS.

But come with me and take a look at this mountain of gold, whose treasures electricity and its helpers, the sooty-faced miners, are bringing forth to the light of the sun. We take the motor car stage at Juneau and fly over the board streets to the outskirts of the city. We wind around under the mountains in full sight of the Treadwell mines across the channel over the way, and at the end of three miles come to Thane, where are the offices and homes of those who manage the great milling plants and reduction works of the property. We can see the mills 700 feet above us on the sides of the mountain. They seem to grow out of the rocks, extending for a long distance down the slopes, so that gravity carries the ore through one process after another.

The offices are right on the sea. The mines themselves are three miles back in the mountains. They begin about 2,500 feet above where we are now, and we are hauled up by a cable to visit them. Our car is an open platform on wheels, with a wall at the lower end to keep us from falling or sliding, as the car climbs the track. The road has a 33 per cent grade, and the way is almost straight up the side of a cliff covered with forests.

At the end of the cable we meet what might be called the private car of the managers. It is a steel box upon wheels with open doors at the sides and seats under cover. It is equipped with a storage battery, and is so small that it can go anywhere throughout the mine. In it we ride around the side of the mountain. We fly through a canyon and enter a tunnel, which is two miles in length and 4,000 feet below the snow-clad peaks overhead. It is through this tunnel that the ore goes in trains to the mills.

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The tunnel is cut right through the ore, and there is an ore body 2000 feet thick overhead. There are other tunnels at various levels and the chutes are so cut that ore from all of these levels can be dropped into the cars far below.

The tunnel is so large that a Pullman train could go through it without scratching the paint. It is lighted by incandescent lamps which hang down from above. It has a double track so that continuous trains of cars can move back and forth at the same time. All of the hauling is done by electricity. In this main tunnel the cars work upon trolleys. The other tunnels are smaller and there the ore cars are hauled by storage battery engines, in order to keep the miners from touching the live wires.

We get off and stand at one side, as an ore train comes thundering along. It is drawn by a powerful electric engine. The train consists of twenty-eight steel cars, each of which holds ten tons of ore. It carries 280 tons of gold-bearing rock, and there is at least $500 worth of gold in its cars.

All of the loading is done by gravity. The ore is blasted out in the great stopes, or caverns, which have been made along the eight levels above us. The stopes are connected with the tunnels of the various levels, and the ore is brought in steel cars from them to the chutes, from where it falls into the great ore bin above the main tunnel where we are now.

The loading arrangements are such that the mere pulling of a lever will drop a river of ore into a car. Four cars are loaded at once, and within two minutes by my watch I saw forty tons put on the train, and within fifteen or twenty minutes a whole train was loaded. After this the cars carry the ore straight to the mills. There it is automatically dumped and the machinery is such that it is hardly touched by man's hands until the gold has been won.

But suppose we take a trip through the mine, visiting some of the tunnels and going into the stopes. We are accompanied by Mr. G. T. Jackson, the assistant manager of the company, and Mr. B. B. Nieding, the mine superintendent. We climb into the cars, and ride through tunnel after tunnel, stopping now and then in a vain search for gold in the rock overhead. Its color might be called a battleship gray. It is a drab slate with little veins and stringers of quartz running through it. It is in the quartz that the gold, lead and iron which form the minerals of the ore body are found. In some of the rich places you can see specks of yellow. The veins run in streaks through the slate rock, and the diamond drills show that such streaks are found everywhere in the great body of ore not yet outlined by the tunnels.

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By and by we leave our electric engine and ride on one of the shaft elevators to the level above. Our elevator boy is a giant over six feet in height, and he wears a long oilskin coat which makes him look taller. As we pass from level to level we can see the cars moving by; and finally at one thousand feet above where we started we step out and tramp through a tunnel to visit a stope where the miners are working.

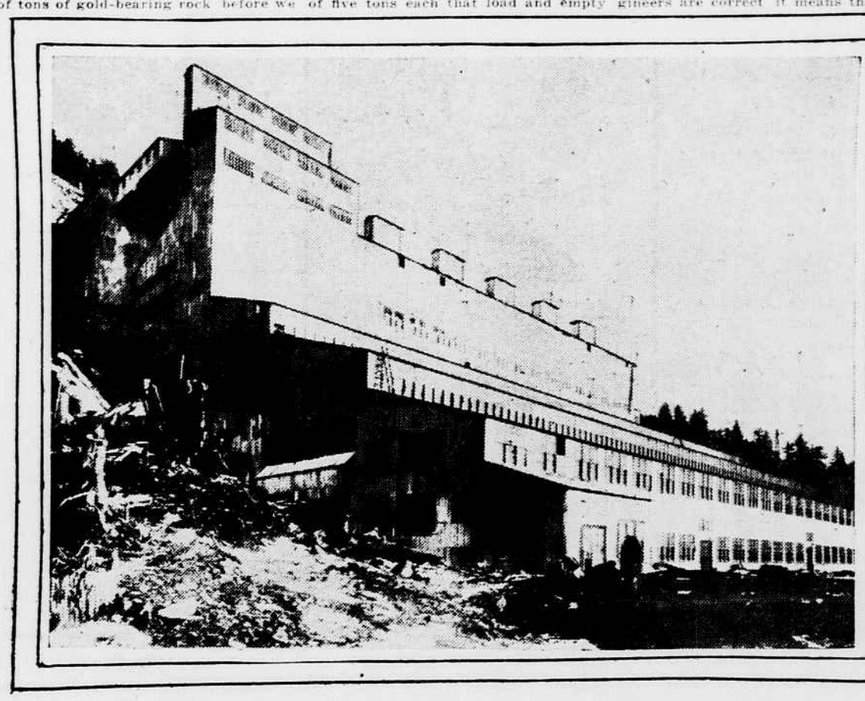
Here the darkness is almost Egyptian and the path is as rough as that of the Hill of Difficulty which so wearied poor Christian to climb. We had acetylene lamps to pick our way over the beds of ore underfoot and we crawled up and down over thousands of tons of gold-bearing rock before we stood under the roof of a low chamber covering more than an acre.

We could now see the miners at work. Each had his own light, which shone dim in the distance. They were operating drills moved by compressed air, and were putting in the dynamite for blasting the ore. At certain hours the blasts are shot off, and the great masses of rock are thus taken out and broken for the cars and the mills.

Each stope or cavern is 400 feet long, 120 feet wide and 400 feet deep. Its contents are equal to a solid block of rock with the base of an acre extending to a height of four hundred feet, or more than two-thirds that of the Washington Monument. Think of a block of that size streaked with gold. As I lifted my acetylene lamp to the roof I could see the veins of white quartz running this way and that and I was fortunate to be able to pick out with my knife blade a grain of gold the size of the head of a pin.

As I did so the superintendent told me they had thirteen other stopes now being worked.

After leaving the mines I went to the mills. They are said to be the largest and most modern of any gold-crushing plant in the world. Within the past year the company has spent five million dollars upon them and nothing has been spared to make machinery do every possible part of the work. Everything is moved by electricity. Electric cranes, some of which will lift thirty tons, carry great loads from place to place. The same force raises the ore and there are automatic skips of five tons each that load and empty themselves, moving on day and night all the year through.



THE MILLS ARE SAID TO BE THE LARGEST AND BEST EQUIPPED IN THE WORLD.

The ore comes from the mines on trains drawn by electric engines. It is dumped by electricity upon screens the wires of which are as thick as your thumb, and it passes thence into immense crushers, which take the largest pieces and break them into lumps about two inches thick.

From these screens the ore goes into storage bins of 10,000 tons each, and from them it is carried by skips and wide belt conveyors through sets of steel rollers that work on the principle of a clothes wringer. The rollers are so graduated that they crush the ore finer and finer as it goes through one set after another, until the great rocks are reduced to a powder as fine as the flour of which cream crackers are made.

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The flour, which contains the rock and gold, is then passed over shaking tables flooded with water in such a way that gravity separates the minerals from the rocks, the heaviest particles failing to lower side of the table. You can then see the various minerals, each having its own streak of color. There is the lead with its mixture of gold and silver; there at the bottom the pure gold, a streak of yellow grains and dust. Above the lead is the lighter black iron sand.

After the gold and lead are thus separated they are passed over Wilfley tables covered with mercury. The mercury takes up the gold, and it is then put through the furnace and vaporized, to get the gold out.

Until now the mines and mills have been working at four or five thousand tons per day, but during the present year the manager expects to increase this amount to, at least, 10,000 tons, and from that time on there will be a steady stream of gold ore moving out of the mountains through the mills and down to the sea. Ten thousand tons of ore at $1.50 of gold to the ton means $15,000 per day added to the gold supply of the world. It means that the output of this mine will eventually be more than $5,000,000 worth of gold per year, and if the estimates of the engineers are correct it means that this output will continue for from 75 to 100 years to come. To return to my former comparison, all this will be made of peas of gold and pinches of dust.

As to the human element in the Gastineau mines, the labor and management seem to be excellent. There are now about 1,100 men employed upon the property, and I am told that the number will not be greatly increased when the mine is working at double its present capacity, the machinery being such that units can be added and the same men do double the work.

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The men are of a better class than the average miner of the United States proper. Fully one-third of them are Americans, and, in addition, there are large numbers of English, Irish and Scotch. There are also Slavs, Italians, Swedes and Norwegians. Not a few have come here as prospectors and have been attracted to the work by the high wages paid. Common laborers get $3 and upward a day, and skilled men $4.50 and $5. The experts and officers receive the highest of salaries. The general manager, Mr. B. L. Thane, is a young Californian who has made a record for his efficiency and mining ability.

I find that the employes are well cared for. The company has large bunk houses or dormitories in which the men sleep, and it also has dining halls which will seat five hundred at one meal. I sat down with that number at dinner. The food was excellent and better cooked than in most of the restaurants scattered throughout the states. The company serves two thousand such meals every day for the miners, and an equal number, I judge, to the hands in the mills.

I was interested in the kitchens. They have steam cookers and bakers. They have boilers that will cook a barrel of soup at a time and ranges as wide as a dining table and twelve feet in length. The vegetables are peeled by electricity, the coffee is ground by an electric curent, and the same force washes the dishes and mixes the bread, taking a whole barrel of flour for one big lump of dough.

Connected with the eating establishment is a bakery that turns out cakes and pies by the hundreds and serves hot rolls every night and hot cakes for breakfast. The company charges its men $1 a day for board and room, and the receipts therefrom are spent in keeping up this part of the establishment.

For the married men there are comfortable cottages lighted by electricity and heated by steam. The rent paid is $4 per month per room, and each family boards itself. The company has its own stores, where the men can buy for cash or for coupons advanced on the basis of their monthly wages. There are also clubrooms, equipped with billiard arrangements, and tables for cards, checkers and dominoes. The men work day and night shifts of nine hours each, and for this reason the clubrooms are usually filled day and night by those who are off work. There is also a reading room, with the latest magazines and papers, and the men have their clubs of one kind or another.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

The Cynical Fish.

"HIS books are cynical," said Winston Churchill at the Century Club. "His books give us a depressing view of mankind. They are like the fish story.

"A mother fish was swimming with three or four thousand of her offspring, when one of them swallowed a big, juicy worm and—whisk!—shot up and disappeared.

"The other little fish had often witnessed this phenomenon. Now one of them said:

"'Is it unhealthy to get caught, mamma?'

"'Oh, no, my dear; far from it,' the mother fish cynically replied. 'All our tribe increases 80 or 90 per cent in weight on being landed.'"

An Insufferable Boozer.

JOHN L. SULLIVAN heckled a heckler in a temperance address in Chicago last week.

"You say alcohol's poison," the heckler asserted, rising, "but are you aware, sir, that a German in Milwaukee has lived a year on beer alone?"

"That," said Mr. Sullivan, "is certainly as it should be. Any man who lives on beer ought to be compelled to live alone."

Low Prayers.

BISHOP CANDLER said, at a luncheon in Atlanta:

"The prayers of some people mount no higher than the little girl's.

"'Do you say your prayers regularly?' I once asked a little girl.

"'Yes, sir,' she answered.

"'And to whom do you address your prayers?' I continued.

"'Sometimes,' said she, 'I pray to mother's lap and sometimes to the bed.'"